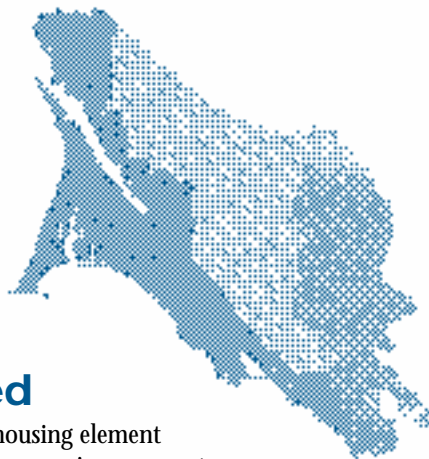


Chapter One

About the Housing Workbook and the Housing Element



Why the Housing Workbook has been Prepared

All the cities and counties in California are required to have a housing element which establishes housing objectives, strategies, policies and programs in response to community housing conditions and needs. The housing element is one part of a jurisdiction's general plan and it is used as a guide for near-term and long-range planning. All 101 cities and nine counties in the San Francisco Bay Area region are required to update the housing element of their respective general plans. While this is a legal requirement for all jurisdictions, it is an unprecedented opportunity to share our experiences and ideas, and to forge a common understanding of how best to face the challenge of meeting Marin's housing needs.

Despite all of our successes, housing affordability in Marin and in the Bay Area as a whole is now at an all-time low. This has implications for all of us, as it becomes more difficult to fill vacant jobs; roadways are clogged with workers traveling longer distances; and many young families, longtime residents, and other community members relocate because they can no longer afford to live here.

The *Marin Housing Workbook* process is being jointly sponsored by all of the local government jurisdictions in Marin — all eleven towns and cities, and the County. Although each jurisdiction in Marin has different characteristics and a pride in uniqueness, they also have many opportunities and challenges in common. This is especially true in the area of housing. Thus, an opportunity exists to learn from each other and to establish strategic cooperation to respond to the pressing need for workforce and special needs housing in Marin. This approach can:

- (1) **Provide Better Data.** Through combining resources, we can support a more detailed and comprehensive level of data collection and analysis of countywide and jurisdiction-specific housing issues.
- (2) **Ensure a Multi-Jurisdictional Approach to Multi-Jurisdictional Issues.** Marin's housing markets operate across jurisdictional lines. Without coordination of common housing policy, data and definitions between jurisdictions — or at least a forum to discuss the possibility of coordination — local housing policies may not effectively respond to market realities. Implementation will be much easier when there are common data, definitions and program approaches when appropriate.
- (3) **Promote Innovation and Sustainability.** Long-term viability depends on the ability to develop innovative, effective responses ("best practices") to the affordable housing crisis.
- (4) **Efficiently Address Issues.** Many of the tasks required in the housing element process will be repeated by each jurisdiction in the County. By pooling resources and coordinating work efforts, everyone can realize a substantial cost savings.

- (5) **Provide a Coordinated Response.** The State (Department of Housing and Community Development — HCD) requires that each jurisdiction develop a housing element that complies with very specific requirements of State law regarding actions to address housing needs and issues. By working together, the Marin County jurisdictions can provide a coordinated response to this State mandate on many issues, while still having jurisdiction autonomy as appropriate. Not only will this demonstrate to HCD that there is a serious effort on the part of local jurisdictions, it will provide support for making sure individual housing elements are certified.
- (6) **Build a Framework for Implementation.** A valuable outcome of this coordinated strategy will be countywide agreement on housing terms and methodologies, allowing communication to occur more effectively on housing issues, coordinating future efforts, and monitoring success over time.
- (7) **Develop Real Solutions.** The critical nature of the affordable housing crisis in Marin County (and throughout the Bay Area) requires that more is done than just responding to the State's mandate. It requires that real solutions are found. A coordinated housing element effort cannot provide all the solutions, but it will be an important step in the process.

Legal Requirements for Housing Elements

The Role of the Housing Element

The State of California has enacted legislation that sets forth the requirement that the general plans of all cities and counties contain, among other things, a housing element. The rules regarding housing elements are stated in California Government Code Sections 65580-65589. The statewide goal is given as “decent housing and a suitable living environment for every California family.” As with any element or part of a jurisdiction's general plan, the evaluation of local housing plans and programs can essentially occur whenever needed. However, State law is much more specific in regard to the timing and requirements for updating the housing element—“the housing element shall be revised as appropriate, but not less than every five years to reflect the results of this periodic review” (65588(a)).

Currently, every county, city and town in the Bay Area is undertaking a process to update its Housing Element. This represents a rare opportunity to consider and address the Bay Area's housing crisis in a meaningful fashion, laying the foundation for a more sustainable and livable future. The Housing Element process is a strategic opportunity to develop real solutions to local housing needs. It is an opportunity to engage local residents, housing advocates, developers, elected officials, and other stakeholders in a constructive dialogue to define and evaluate potential strategies and solutions.

The law establishes that all cities and counties have responsibilities to contribute to the attainment of that state goal. Each jurisdiction's housing element is required to demonstrate how the goal will be furthered locally. Housing elements are required to contain analyses of local housing needs and resources (including funds and sites), and elements must make adequate provision for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community. The substantive requirements for a housing element are set forth in Article 10.6 and §65583 of the California Government Code.

“The housing element shall consist of an identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. The housing element shall identify adequate sites for housing, including rental housing, factory-built housing, and mobilehomes, and shall make adequate provision for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.”

Review by HCD

Before it is adopted, a Housing Element must be submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review. New Housing Elements must be submitted 90 days prior to adoption, while amended, updated or revised Housing Elements (such as those in Marin County) must be submitted 60 days prior to adoption. In other words, unless it is the very first Housing Element adopted by a community, all amendments and revisions (including the five-year revisions) must be submitted *60 days before adoption*. Section 65584(b) and (c) of the Government Code specifies:

“At least ... 60 days prior to the adoption of an amendment to this [housing] element, the planning agency of a local government shall submit a draft of the element or amendment to the department. The department shall review drafts submitted to it and report its findings to the planning agency ... within 45 days of receipt of the draft... The legislative body shall consider the department’s findings prior to final adoption of the housing element or amendment unless the department’s findings are not available within the above prescribed time limits...”

When reviewing housing elements, HCD evaluates a housing element's effectiveness based on the sufficiency of the element for the following:

- (1) **Housing Needs and Resources.** “An assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to meeting these needs.” (Section 65583(a))
- (2) **Goals and Strategies.** “A statement of the community’s goals, quantified objectives, and policies relative to the maintenance, preservation, improvement, and development of housing.” (Section 65583(b))
- (3) **Follow-up Actions.** “A program which sets forth a five-year schedule of actions...to implement the policies and achieve the goals and objectives....” (Section 65583(c))

The housing element must also include an analysis of the community's current and projected housing needs and resources, and of the constraints to housing development in meeting identified needs. Here, the local government must provide an up-to-date appraisal of the state of the unmet housing needs of all economic segments of the community, including the community's share of the regional housing need, and an inventory of the land and resources that are available to meet these needs.

The needs analysis must also address any special housing needs, such as for the disabled, elderly, female-headed households and homeless. Income categories to be addressed are defined as a percentage of Marin County Median Household Income for four person households:

- ◆ *Very-Low Income* 50% and below of county median income
- ◆ *Low Income* 50-80% of county median income
- ◆ *Moderate Income* 80-120% of county median income
- ◆ *Above-Moderate Income* 120% and above of county median income

Once a draft housing element is submitted, HCD then conducts a review and must issue written findings determining whether the element or amendment “substantially complies” with housing element law. Any public agency, group, or person may submit written comments during the review process. Prior to submittal of a formal response letter, HCD staff will review the element, consider other correspondence received, and call the local jurisdiction to clarify issues and gain a better understanding of local issues.

When HCD’s review letter is received, the local legislative body must consider HCD’s findings. If HCD finds that the element is substantially out of compliance with the Housing Element laws, the legislative body is required to either: (1) Change the *draft housing element* to achieve substantial compliance; or (2)

KEY FINDING (1.1): What Happens If a Housing Element Does Not Comply with State Law?

If HCD determines that a Housing Element fails to substantially comply with the State's Housing Element Law, there are potentially serious consequences that extend beyond the realm of residential land use planning.

When a jurisdiction's Housing Element is found to be out of compliance, its General Plan is at risk of being deemed inadequate, and therefore invalid. As a result, because all planning and development decisions must be consistent with a valid General Plan, a local government with a non-compliant General Plan may not proceed to make land use decisions and approve development until it brings its General Plan—including its Housing Element—into compliance with State law. A Housing Element is considered out of compliance if: (1) It has not been revised and updated by the statutory deadline, or (2) its contents do not substantially comply with the statutory requirements. When determining whether a Housing Element is inadequate, a court must give great weight to the determination of HCD.

Additional repercussions can include:

- (1) **Reduced Access to Infrastructure and Transportation Funding.** Both the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (CIEDB) and the Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) award funds based on competitions that take into consideration the approval status of a community's housing element. (See CIEDB's Criteria, Priorities and Guidelines for its Infrastructure State Revolving Fund Program and MTC's Project Review Criteria for its Transportation for Livable Communities Program.)
- (2) **Reduced Access to Housing Funds.** Lack of an HCD-certified housing element can also seriously undermine a jurisdiction's ability to access competitive housing funds. For example, HCD takes into consideration the approval status of a community's Housing Element when awarding state-controlled HOME funds. Thus, it is virtually impossible for a community that does not have an approved Element to win such funds, which can mean the potential loss of millions of dollars of housing funds in some jurisdictions.
- (3) **Court Order Restricting Development and/or Approving Affordable Housing.** Upon finding that a Housing Element is out of compliance with the law, the court must order the community to bring the Element into compliance within 120 days and: 1) Suspend the locality's authority to issue building permits or grant zoning changes, variances or subdivision map approvals; and/or 2) mandate approval of residential developments that will not inhibit the ability of the locality to adopt an adequate element. (Government Code §65754) (Note: Affordable housing developments are presumed not to inhibit the adoption of an adequate element. (§65760))
- (4) **Payment of Substantial Attorney Fees.** If a jurisdiction faces a court action stemming from its lack of compliance, and either loses or settles the case, it often must pay substantial attorney fees to the plaintiff's attorneys in addition to the fees paid to its own attorneys.

adopt the *draft housing element* without changes and include written findings explaining why the legislative body believes it does substantially comply.

Upon adoption, the *final housing element* must be submitted back to HCD for review for *90 days*, after which HCD will report its final written findings to the local government, stating whether the *housing element* complies with State law requirements. HCD's letters of review frequently mention several common deficiencies, including: (1) Lack of quantified, numeric objectives; (2) lack of analysis of the special needs of certain population groups; (3) lack of specific programs tied to the needs identified in the

element; (4) failure to identify a time frame or responsible agency for carrying out programs; (5) failure to describe data methodology and the assumptions used when deriving estimates; (6) insufficient sites zoned at high enough densities to accommodate the regional need for very low, low and moderate income housing; and (7) lack of sufficient analysis of potential governmental constraints (processing time or development standards) which may pose an impediment to the development of housing.

Community Involvement in the Housing Workbook

The housing element must identify community involvement and decision-making processes and techniques that are affirmative steps to get input from low-income persons and their representatives as well as other members of the community. This means that input should be sought, received and considered before the draft housing element is completed.

Specific processes will be used for much more detailed discussion of each community's goals, policies and specific actions to address their housing needs. Those processes are intended to build upon the process undertaken to date on the Housing Workbook. Below is an overview of each event conducted as part of the Housing Workbook. The VISION for Housing In Marin County, and many of the ideas proposed in the Housing Workbook evolved from the events described below. Also included in the Housing Workbook is a summary of each event.



'TELL US' workshop -- Small group discussion.

In an effort to involve all economic segments of the community, the Marin Housing Workbook process, from its inception, has been developed through an open, inclusive process, including the events described below. The 4,000 persons and organizations on the mailing list include all housing-related non-profits in Marin County and persons from a mailing list provided by the Marin Housing Authority. In addition, recommendations considered as part of the "best practices", contained later in this document, were made by groups such as the Marin Housing Element Coalition, Greenbelt Alliance and Non-Profit Housing of Northern California. A study session was also conducted with HCD staff and the County's Planning Directors.

November and December 2000 Workshops

In November and December of 2000, four workshops were held throughout the county (San Rafael, Mill Valley, Kentfield, and Point Reyes Station) to discuss a VISION for Housing In Marin County and to take an initial cut on ways to address workforce and special housing needs. Notices were sent to a mailing list of over 1,000 individuals and organizations. Approximately 150 people attended the four workshops. Each workshop followed the same agenda. The workshops focused on the following three questions:

- (1) ***What are trends and challenges we face today?*** Despite all of our successes, Marin faces critical challenges in many areas, including housing. Housing affordability in Marin and in the Bay Area as a whole is now at an all-time low. This has implications for all of us, as it becomes more difficult to fill vacant jobs; roadways are clogged with workers traveling longer distances; and many young families, longtime residents, and other community members relocate because they can no longer afford to live here.

The purpose of this part of the workshop was to take a few moments to talk about the trends and challenges facing Marin today, especially in the area of housing, and to help establish a comprehensive understanding of housing needs, issues, trends and challenges based on peoples' firsthand views and perspectives.

- (2) ***What is our VISION for housing?*** Visioning is a way of looking at the future. Instead of focusing only on today's issues and concerns, visioning jumps to a point in time (say the year 2020) to help us define what we want to achieve. It helps us to understand what we value, and to take a positive, constructive look at our community. With a clearer idea of what it is we want our community to be like, we can chart a more meaningful and effective course to get there.
- (3) ***How can we realize our VISION?*** The *VISION* for housing will be refined over the course of the coming months as we explore our ideas more fully and focus more closely on specific areas of need and each individual community. A key role of the Housing Element—assisted by information in the *Marin Housing Workbook*—will be to clearly articulate a vision for housing, including specific goals and objectives, and to lay out a set of strategies, policies and programs for achieving them. The final part of the workshop was intended to spend some time talking about possible key strategies which will help us to effectively realize our vision for housing.

March 2001 'Housing Experts' Work Session

This work session was designed as a way to involve practitioners in identifying workable "best practices" for consideration in each jurisdiction's housing element. The session provided an opportunity to draw upon different experiences, expertise and perspectives about how best to respond to our housing needs while achieving goals for livability, commerce and environmental protection.

The work session also provided an opportunity to share perspectives of affordable housing providers/practitioners, staff and neighborhood/environmental concerns on barriers and opportunities for providing affordable housing. Twenty people were invited in order to keep the dialogue focused and manageable, and to include people who might bring new perspectives.

Participant comments were recorded either on flip chart pads or on a large wall-graphic. The work session was structured around participant discussion of second units, how we can make the most of housing opportunity sites, local funding for affordable housing, and mixed use and infill housing opportunities.

'Housing Experts' Work Session Participants

Dirk Brinckerhoff, San Rafael Chamber, Workforce Housing
 Bob Brown, San Rafael Community Development Director
 Barbara Collins, Marin County Affordable Housing Strategist
 Charlotte Flynn, Sausalito Planning Director
 Kathleen Foote, MCF Board and former Mill Valley Councilmember
 Mike Ghilmetti, private affordable housing developer
 John Leonard, former Mill Valley Councilmember
 Marge Macris, Sierra Club and former Marin County Planning Director
 Betty Padgett, EAH and Housing Council
 David Rosen, financial expert
 Jim Shafer, private affordable housing developer
 Susan Stompe, MCL
 Janet Stone, Greenbelt Alliance
 Lydia Tan, Bridge Housing
 Lamar Turner, EAH
 Chantel Walker, MCF Program Officer, Community Develop.
 Dick Watts, San Rafael General Plan Steering Committee
 Sallyanne Wilson, MCF Program Officer, Environment
 Maurice Wolahan, MCHA, BMR Program

April 2001 'Open House' to Review Housing Options

The Open House was held on April 4, 2001 from 5:00 to 9:00 P.M. in the 3rd floor lobby and Board of Supervisors Chambers at the Marin County Civic Center in San Rafael. An initial notice and then follow-up postcard notice were sent to a mailing list of over 4,000 individuals and organizations. The Open House was designed as a drop-in event so that people could come for 30 minutes or stay longer depending on their interest. It was designed this way in respect to peoples' time in coming, and to make it easier to review information and give comments.

One hundred thirty two individuals registered and participated in the event. An approximate additional 12 to 15 individuals participated but did not register as they were admitted quickly, in order for them to attend the presentations in a timely fashion. Participants were asked to express their opinions, ideas and strategies that would positively effect the development of affordable housing.

Six interactive stations were developed along with several informational areas. Each station had planning staff members from various jurisdictions throughout Marin County to answer questions and listen to ideas and concerns. In addition, two special presentations were provided on density and design, and workforce housing. The stations included:

- (1) **Identification of where open house participants live and work** — *mapping exercise*
- (2) **Confirming Our VISION for Housing**
- (3) **Designing Housing that "Fits In"** — *a density and design exercise*
- (4) **What Is "Affordable Housing"?** — *Video, Powerpoint and other displays*
- (5) **How Can We Use Our Land Efficiently?**
- (6) **Meeting Special Housing Needs**
- (7) **How Can We Make It Happen?**
- (8) **Where Should We Put New Housing?**

Participants were given dots to apply to the ideas they believe are the most effective. Comment space was also provided to allow for additional comments. Every participant was given a zip code map based on where they live in Marin County or, secondly, where they work in Marin County. Participants used this map to identify where they thought mixed use housing, second units, and new multifamily housing could be developed in their communities. If they did not believe these housing strategies should be pursued then they did not place those dots on their map.

At the last station, participants posted their maps for others to view in a collage format. The maps were collected and are summarized in the attachment to this summary report. Materials provided to participants included: Overview of Regional Housing Needs, Overview of State Law Requirements for Local Housing Elements, Glossary of Key Housing Terms, a summary of the four previous workshop sessions, and a guide to the Open House.



'Experts' Work Session participants group discussion.



'Open House' participants reviewing Nov/Dec 2001 Workshops wall-graphics, which were also reduced and included in a Summary Report.

Use of the Housing Workbook in Follow-Up Activities

The *Housing Workbook* is intended to assist each community in its process for: (1) setting strategic directions; (2) developing policies and programs; (3) reviewing and adopting the housing element; and (4) initiating implementation activities. Materials from the Workbook include “Fact Sheets” on Housing and other workshop displays and presentation materials. Requirements for public participation are described in Section 65583(6)(B)) of the Government Code. To date, materials from the Workbook have been used at community workshops for Marin County, the City of Novato and the City of San Rafael.

The process is also intended to coordinate among various departments and other local agencies and housing groups, community organizations and housing sponsors in the collection of data and development of “best practices”. Collaboration enhances the effectiveness of housing element programs in indicating “the agencies and officials responsible for the implementation” (Section 65583(c)(6)(B)).

Organization of the Marin Housing Workbook

The *Marin Housing Workbook* compiles and analyzes a wide range of data on housing conditions and needs as part of this project, to provide a comprehensive understanding of housing needs, issues, trends and challenges. It was conceived as a way to comprehensively examine countywide housing issues, share resources in undertaking necessary background analysis, and develop “best practices” (model policies, programs and implementing tools) tailored to Marin County. A special emphasis has also been placed on facilitating effective community dialogue of housing issues, opportunities and choices. Appendices and attachments to the Housing Workbook include: Facts About Housing; Community Workshops and Meeting Summaries; Data Analysis Spreadsheets; Miscellaneous Housing Information; and Community Workshop Materials.

Figure 1.1: TOPICS COVERED IN THE MARIN HOUSING WORKBOOK

Chapter One

About the Housing Workbook and the Housing Element

Why the Housing Workbook Has Been Prepared
Legal Requirements for Housing Elements
Community Involvement in the Housing Workbook
Organization of the Housing Workbook
Relationship of the Housing Element to Other General Plan Elements and ‘Smart Growth’ Principles

Chapter Two

Overview of Housing Needs in Marin County

Population and Employment Trends
Housing Conditions
Household Characteristics
Housing Costs, Household Income and the Ability to Pay for Housing
Special Housing Needs
How Much Housing Do We Need?
Potential Resources and Programs
Discussion of Key Issues

Chapter Three

“Best Practices” — A Framework For Action

Introduction
A Vision for Housing in Marin
Housing Goals
Housing Strategies, Policies and Actions
Strategy 1: Work Together to Achieve Housing
Strategy 2: Maintain and Enhance Existing Housing and Blend Well-Designed New Housing into Existing Neighborhoods
Strategy 3: Use Our Land Efficiently to Meet Housing Needs and to Implement ‘Smart’ and Sustainable Development Principles
Strategy 4: Provide Housing for Special Needs Populations
Strategy 5: Build Local Government Institutional Capacity and Monitor Accomplishments to Respond to Housing Needs Effectively Over Time

Appendices

A: Facts About Housing
B: Community Workshops Summaries
C: Workshop Materials
D: Miscellaneous Housing Information
E: Housing Data Analysis Spreadsheets

The products from this work effort include (1) the *Marin Housing Workbook*, and (2) a *Preliminary Draft Housing Element* for each participating jurisdiction. The *Preliminary Draft Housing Element* for each participating jurisdiction will include all topics required to be addressed in State law, while the *Housing Workbook* is intended to provide an overview of key issues. Data from the *Marin Housing Workbook* will supplement more specific information collected for each jurisdiction. As shown below, the *Marin Housing Workbook* goes beyond merely meeting State law requirements for Housing Elements to provide a "kit of parts" of housing information for use by each jurisdiction.

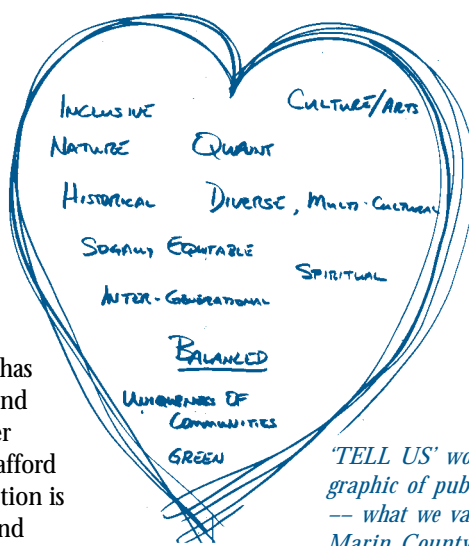
Relationship of the Housing Element to Other Elements in the General Plan and to 'Smart Growth' Principles

The goals and policies of all general plan elements must be internally consistent. Internal consistency of in each jurisdiction's general plan assures that the goals, policies and actions of all elements are mutually supportive. The housing element must address all State requirements, including relevant legislation enacted subsequent to adoption of previous elements. Updated housing elements will contain information on housing constraints and actions to deal with constraints. In some cases, specific actions will be recommended to look at land use designations or examine ways we can use our land more wisely and somewhat differently than we have in the past. One of the benefits of undertaking the Marin Housing Workbook is the use of common base population, housing, land use, environmental and employment data, including the most recent 2000 Census data.

Each jurisdiction's housing element will include information on the number of units required to meet their specific housing need and share of the regional need. Sites with development potential in accordance with each jurisdiction's housing needs will be evaluated. The general plan, including an updated housing element, will (1) act as a guide for municipal decisions which effect the quality and quantity of housing; and, (2) maintain the present quality of life by balancing the availability of housing with other environmental considerations.

As Marin communities feel increasingly "built out" and as the affordability crisis deepens, the challenge of meeting community housing needs has become increasingly difficult. Residents who feel that their community is already overbuilt or who fear that continued growth will have significant adverse impacts on community livability are understandably concerned about a planning process that seeks to accommodate more growth in their community. The result is that we have increasingly been reluctant to allow new residential development in Marin in the hopes of preserving our community quality and livability.

But what we have learned over the past twenty years is that saying "no" to housing has not preserved the quality and livability of our communities. As the demand for housing has grown, the severe constraint on housing supply has resulted in significant inflation of home prices and rents, forcing people to move further and further from where they work to find a home they can afford or to double-up. Partly as a result, traffic congestion is growing at nearly twice the rate of population and



*"TELL US" workshop
graphic of public comments
-- what we value about
Marin County*

employment growth in the County. Saying “no” to housing has resulted in more urban sprawl and loss of open space in outlying areas; an imbalance between the types of jobs and housing affordability; long commutes for local workers; a loss of community diversity; and high housing prices.

There is a substantial and growing movement in the Bay Area to find ways to encourage ‘smart growth’ development patterns that are more compact, transit-oriented, well-designed, and livable. A central focus of this movement for achieving a more sustainable and livable Bay Area—is rethinking the way in which we plan, design, rehabilitate, preserve and manage housing

Smart growth principles help us understand and respond to the relationships between housing and other issues that are critical to the long-term livability of our communities. Housing strategies should help us to grow smart—making efficient use of vacant parcels, putting under-used areas to better use, ensuring innovative designs that fit in with existing neighborhoods, responding to local needs, and enhancing our quality of life.

The Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development is a coalition of business groups, government agencies, environmentalists, developers, and neighborhood interests working together to develop and promote a shared vision for how the region can grow in a more sustainable manner. The Alliance has developed the ‘Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area’ to define a region-wide consensus for sustainability. The ‘ten commitments’ (see side-bar) are taken from a draft version of the compact, now under review and discussion by elected officials, business leaders and residents throughout the region.

According to the California Department of Finance projections, about 75% of the new housing needed in California is due to the natural growth of our existing population. In the Bay Area, according to ABAG, about 50% of our population increase will be due to natural increases. As we continue to have children and we continue to live longer, our housing needs grow and change along with us. As the Bay Area’s economy grows and generates wealth, new housing needs are created as well.

KEY FINDING (1.2): Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development — Ten Commitments for a Sustainable Bay Area

- 1 Enable a diversified, sustainable and competitive economy to prosper and provide jobs in order to achieve a high quality of life for all residents.
- 2 Accommodate sufficient housing affordable to all income levels within the Bay Area to match population increases and job generation.
- 3 Target transportation investments to achieve a world-class, comprehensive, integrated and balanced multi-modal system that supports efficient land use and decreases dependency on single-occupant vehicle trips.
- 4 Preserve and restore the region’s natural assets, including San Francisco Bay, farmland, open space, other habitats and the region’s air and water quality.
- 5 Use resources efficiently, eliminate pollution and significantly reduce waste.
- 6 Focus investment to preserve and revitalize neighborhoods.
- 7 Provide all residents with the opportunity for quality education and lifelong learning to help them meet their highest aspirations.
- 8 Promote healthy and safe communities.
- 9 Implement local government fiscal reforms and revenue sharing.
- 10 Stimulate civic engagement.

(Underlining added for emphasis)

Below are “Interim Guiding Principle” prepared as part of the current Marin Countywide Plan Update process. As noted below, providing affordable housing near transit, jobs, shopping, and recreational areas is a core consideration.

KEY FINDING (1.3): Marin Countywide Plan Update Interim Guiding Principles

Link equity, economy, and the environment locally, regionally and globally — We will improve the vitality of our community, economy, and environment. We will seek innovations that provide multiple benefits to Marin County.

Use finite and renewable resources efficiently and effectively — We will reduce consumption and reuse and recycle resources. We will reduce waste by optimizing the full life cycle of products and processes.

Reduce the release of hazardous materials — We will make continual progress toward eliminating the release of substances that cause damage to living systems. We will strive to prevent environmentally-caused diseases.

Steward our natural and agricultural assets — We will continue to protect open space and wilderness, and enhance habitats and bio-diversity. We will protect and support agricultural lands and activities and provide markets for fresh, locally grown food.

Provide efficient and effective transportation — We will expand our public transportation systems to better connect jobs, housing, schools, shopping and recreational facilities. We will provide affordable and convenient transportation alternatives that reduce our dependence on single occupancy vehicles, conserve resources, improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion.

Supply housing affordable to the full range of our workforce and community — We will provide and maintain well designed, energy efficient, diverse housing close to job centers, shopping and transportation links. We will pursue innovative opportunities to finance workforce housing, promote infill development and reuse and redevelop underutilized sites.

Foster businesses that provide a balance of economic, environmental and social benefits — We will retain, expand and attract a diversity of businesses that meet the needs of our residents and strengthen our economic base. We will partner with local employers to address transportation and housing needs.

Educate and prepare our workforce and residents — We will make high quality education, workforce preparation and lifelong learning opportunities available to all sectors of our community. We will help all children succeed in schools, participate in civic affairs, acquire and retain well-paying jobs, and achieve economic independence.

Cultivate ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic diversity — We will honor our past, celebrate our cultural diversity, and respect human dignity. We will build vibrant communities, enact programs to maintain, share and appreciate our cultural differences and similarities.

Support public health, safety, and social justice — We will live in healthy, safe communities and provide equal access to amenities and services. We will particularly protect and nurture our children, our elders, and the more vulnerable members of our community.

(Underlining added for emphasis)

The lack of affordable, workforce housing impacts the services available to us. Local businesses have to pay more to recruit and retain employees and risk losing experienced personnel. Public agencies, school districts, social services, and child and elder care have a difficult time attracting people to work in Marin. And there are safety issues associated with the large percentage of police, fire and other public safety personnel who live out of the area.

Not responding to our changing housing needs will have environmental, economic, and social consequences. Our communities will continue to change — they will be more expensive, less diverse, and more auto-dependent as people live further from where they work. People who grow up here will not be able to find a house here because there will not be enough housing available, regardless of the price.

While the updated housing element must be consistent with the goals, policies and land use designations contained in each community's adopted general plan, they may also include several recommended modifications to the current general plan in response to issues brought up during the update process, including those related to "smart growth". These items may include: (1) How to calculate densities and apply density and other development incentives to make more efficient use of land; (2) incentives for residential mixed use and mixed use intensity calculations; and (3) second unit standards and processing.

However, none of the tools, strategies or programs developed through our housing elements will be of use if local residents and stakeholders do not understand, appreciate and support their implementation. Our challenge is to develop strategies for saying "yes", particularly to more affordable housing that enhances our communities. Not "yes" to any type of housing of any design in any location, but "yes" to a diversity of housing types that are well designed and located in places that make sense. Meeting the challenge of housing in Marin will require a countywide dialogue, collaboration and commitment.

Fortunately, the communities of Marin have long been committed to broad community involvement in local planning matters and collaboration among its various jurisdictions to address important countywide issues. Issues from shared police and safety services to regional traffic and countywide land use planning have brought together our jurisdictions to share in ideas and develop solutions to pressing needs. We have now reached a point in Marin County's evolution where the lack of housing in our community—for our workforce and special needs populations—will have dramatic long-term implications for what our county is like environmentally, socially, and economically.